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Third World Feminism in the Eighties



Bisexual Pride

Safe Sex in New York Baths

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New York Bath Owners to Promote Safe Sex

By Sue Hyde

NEW YORK — Acknowledging the potential dangers in government intervention, members of this city's gay and lesbian community and owners of about half the city's bathhouses are working together to promote safe sex in the baths to reduce both the risk of AIDS and the risk of forced closure or police raids.

At a meeting in early February, representatives of the Coalition for Sexual Responsibility, a six-month-old group of concerned gay and lesbian activists, and owners of six of the 11 gay bathhouses in the city met to discuss safe sex in the baths.

Efforts are underway to hold a second meeting which, it is hoped, will include those owners who failed to attend the first. And one bath owner is attempting to organize a meeting for bathhouse owners only.

The Coalition had called the February 11 meeting to present the owners a list of requests, including visible safe sex posters and literature; free condoms and liquid soap; elimination of glory holes; increased lighting levels; free on-site VD testing; and per-

mission for Coalition representatives to monitor the baths for compliance.

Virginia Apuzzo of the National Gay Task Force and Tim Sweeney of Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund were on hand to facilitate the meeting. Baths sending representatives were the Everard, the St. Marks, East Side Sauna, Ansonia, Sauna, and Wall St. Sauna; failing to send representatives were the Barracks, Beacon, Broadway Arms, Mt. Morris, and Northern Men's Sauna and Health Club.

Apuzzo, Sweeney, and David Nimmons, chair of the Coalition for Sexual Responsibility, all said the bathhouse owners who came to the meeting were interested in promoting safe sex in their clubs and willing to comply with Coalition requests. At some bathhouses, many of the suggestions had already been implemented.

According to Jack Stoddard of the St. Marks Baths, staff hung posters offering medical advice on AIDS risk reduction a year ago. In addition, the light levels were increased, safe sex literature was

made readily available, extra sheets and towels were there for the asking, and pencils and slips of paper were available for sex partners to exchange names and phone numbers.

Stoddard said the staff will begin this week to distribute an envelope to each patron containing a sealed condom and a small card enumerating safe sex guidelines. The cards also have space for recording names and numbers of sex partners. The envelopes bear the inscription, "The contents could save your life."

While Stoddard and his five colleagues earned high praise for their willingness to institute Coalition suggestions, the five absent owners caused concern. David Nimmons told *GCN* that "everybody's got to play this game. If not all the baths are [implementing the guidelines], it's not fair to ask the others to do it."

Nimmons suggested that economic pressure could be brought to bear on bathhouse owners who refuse to comply or simply will not participate in the discussions. "Noncompliers have got to understand that there is a

cost to noncompliance.... If they continue to not get [the message], there's not much of an excuse for them to continue to be patronized."

Charles Vozzi of the East Side Sauna has taken on the job of contacting the no-shows. He is organizing a meeting only for bath owners to be held at the end of March. "I want to find out how serious everyone is about this," Vozzi told *GCN*. "If people are serious then we can see to it that we all subscribe to the guidelines of the Coalition."

Vozzi said the bathhouse owners' group could make quantity purchases of supplies, share information and ideas, and work to

solve problems together. He expressed support for the Coalition's suggestion and said he didn't know why some bath owners failed to attend the initial meeting. But he hopes that his proposed first-ever meeting for bath owners will sow the seeds for an owners' association.

Michael Callen, a member of the Coalition for Sexual Responsibility and a founding member of People with AIDS-New York, has called for governmental involvement in the regulation of the baths. In an article which appeared in the March 12 issue of the *Village Voice*, Callen asserts that sex clubs are businesses, not

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Censorship or civil rights?

Feminists Divided Over L.A.'s Anti-Porn Measure

By Donna Turley

LOS ANGELES — In a divided community feminists are hastily organizing while the Board of Supervisors of Los Angeles County is preparing to vote on an ordinance which would make pornography a violation of women's civil rights. The proposed law is styled after the controversial Minneapolis ordinance written by Catharine MacKinnon and Andrea Dworkin. The measure narrowly missed ratification at the end of February after a public hearing and was instead sent to the county attorney for review of implementation feasibility. The new vote will be taken on March 26.

The legislation was initiated by the Los Angeles County Commission for Women. The Commission started researching the possibility of extending existing obscenity and pornography laws about a year ago. According to Dr. Betty Rosenstein, immediate past president of the Commission, the organization failed to come up with an adequate definition of pornography until the Minneapolis ordinance was brought to their attention. MacKinnon, who is a visiting professor at UCLA's law school this year, offered to redefine the edict to avoid the constitutional problems encountered elsewhere. The current pending version has a more narrow definition of pornography than earlier drafts, and provisions which allow a complainant to bypass administrative agencies and go directly to court with her suit.

Feminists in the community who are against the measure learned that it was being considered only after it was sent to the county attorney. Betty Brooks, a well-known feminist activist who is organizing the Los Angeles chapter of Feminist Anti-Censorship Taskforce (FACT-LA), told *GCN* that "the first in-

dication we had that something was going on was a recent editorial in the newspaper about how the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) is wrong on this issue." She described organizing efforts against the bill as "like running a 220 and being a lap behind. We didn't get started until last week."

In response to various charges that the bill was kept secret and nobody was given a chance to testify against it, Rosenstein from the Commission said, "This was not an orchestrated thing. The agenda for the Board meetings are always published. Minutes of the hearings are public property. The Commission did not ask anyone to testify." She told *GCN* that MacKinnon, attorney Gloria Alred and film director Peter Bogdanovich testified for the measure and two people testified against it. The Board of Supervisors failed to return calls from *GCN* for verification about opposing testimony.

Joan Howarth, one of the early organizers of Women Against Violence Against Women (WAVAW) now organizing with FACT-LA against the legislation told *GCN* that many who were involved in the early WAVAW movement are not part of the anti-pornography movement which grew out of WAVAW. "What we were trying to do in the beginning was very different. Our focus was on mainstream images. The strategy was to create a climate in which to educate us all to understand and critique violence against women in our culture that wasn't anti-sexuality."

Howarth said that feminists working against anti-pornography ordinances have used censorship arguments more than sexuality ones because in a situation which demands fast action, it is difficult to focus on sexuality. Using

feminist literature as an example of something which could get censored "is the easiest way to convince feminists ... especially in the light of a lot of uneducated support" for the bill, she said.

Brooks agrees that the real issue is women's sexuality. She said, "Sexuality is being used to force women back into the traditional role, which means that any kind of sexual expression outside of marriage is considered pornographic and perverted. What is being confused are gender issues and sexuality issues and feminists need to talk to one another rather than legislate through patriarchal institutions."

However, Rosenstein claims that "this is a civil rights issue, not a censorship issue at all." To explain her position she said that she visualized a giant "P" with all the problems of women hanging on strings from the "P". "Every problem of women is a subset of pornography. So long as we allow pornography to foster an environment where women are exploited as victims of sexual terrorism, then we are never going to solve the problems of women."

Howarth, a staff attorney with the ACLU in Southern California, said that if the bill is passed, the ACLU plans to immediately file a lawsuit challenging its constitutionality. If enacted, Los Angeles County will become the only place in the nation with such legislation in effect. Similar acts were defeated in Minneapolis and Suffolk County last year. The law was approved in Indianapolis but was later declared unconstitutional by the Indiana state court. In California, comparable measures are pending in the state senate and in the city of San Diego.

— filed from Boston

600 Women Rally Against the CIA



Women march on the CIA in San Francisco

By International Women's Day Demonstration Committee

SAN FRANCISCO — Over 600 women marched to the CIA headquarters here on International Women's Day, 1985, spilling into the streets of the financial district. Angry chants, drums, and noise-makers filled the air; demonstrators carried a giant Sandinista flag, while other women carried tall puppets representing the CIA and US Army advisors.

A women's percussion band, Sistah Boom, led the march off to the first stop on the tour of the financial district, General Electric, which makes nuclear warheads and components for the MX missile. As the march wound towards GE, women dropped a large banner from an overhead walkway, exposing the fact that GE makes more than lightbulbs.

The next stop was Eli Lilly Corporation, maker of DES, a drug causing cervical cancer and stillbirths for a generation of daughters born to women who had taken the drug during pregnancy. Another huge banner unfurled.

Women threw hundreds of coat hangers on trees and shrubs, in remembrance of thousands of women who died each year when abortions were illegal. A large papier mache coat hanger, symbolizing back-alley abortions, was burned as the crowd chanted, "Our

bodies, our lives; our right to decide." Demonstrators also denounced United Technologies, housed in the same skyscraper, which makes engines for the C-47 planes that daily drop US bombs on liberated zones in El Salvador.

The crowd paused briefly to target the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), which recently arrested and deported 60 El Salvadoran and Guatemalan refugees, returning them to likely death in their homelands. Support was also expressed for the sanctuary movement and its workers, two of whom were recently sentenced to 15 and three years in prison, respectively.

The march culminated at the CIA offices, where a children's contingent hung up a banner proclaiming "Kids Hate War." Women called for reproductive freedom, an end to violence against women, and an end to compulsory heterosexuality. Some women left bloody handprints on the doorway of the headquarters office to symbolize refusal to tolerate the torture and repression inflicted by the CIA.

The march closed with a rally at a nearby park, with speakers from the anti-psychiatry movement and a local feminist health clinic defense committee. The women affirmed a

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News Notes

quote of the week

"Toleration of homosexuality goes without saying as a moral and even spiritual imperative. But gay rights — as with other kinds of new movements which wrap themselves in the flag of rights, like the radical wing of the women's movement — is a call not for toleration at all, but for social legitimation. And indeed for preferential treatment. That I oppose...the assault on the family is fired by fundamentally nihilistic passions."

— Norman Podhoretz, editor of *Commentary* magazine, soon to begin a weekly column for the Boston *Herald*.

unmarried hets get okay on sex

RICHMOND, VA — Virginia laws prohibiting unmarried, consenting heterosexual men and women from living together and having sex were declared unconstitutional late last month by a Federal judge, according to the Washington *Post*.

District Judge Robert Merhige Jr. said the laws on heterosexual acts were in violation of an individual's right to privacy, were too broad, and should not be enforced. Records indicate at least eight arrests on "fornication" charges in Richmond since 1982.

The unmarried couple who challenged the laws said in affidavits that the fear of prosecution had led the to abstain from sex and intruded on the right "to happiness as a single person."

The decision does not directly affect laws prohibiting homosexual acts or prostitution, according to Bert Newborne, national legal director of the American Civil Liberties Union, but the ruling "sets up an argument" against use of Virginia's sodomy statute against homosexuals.

no outside spies

SAN FRANCISCO — The new seven-member Health Commission here has ruled that the city's Health Department must withdraw its request for \$10,000 to employ undercover "investigators" in the baths, according to the *New York Native*.

However, the ruling allows the Health Department to use its own employees as spies.

John Wahl of the Committee for Sexual and Civil Liberties and Mobilization Against AIDS suggested that "the money spent by the city on [spying] could better be spent on educating gay and bisexual men on safe sex practices."

The Health Department remains under court order to monitor the sex activities in the baths.

cuban refugees's status clarified by immigration service

WASHINGTON, DC — The Immigration and Naturalization Services has formally assured representatives of two gay/lesbian organizations that Cuban refugees who entered the United States as part of the Mariel boatlift and were identified as gay or lesbian by others will not be excluded from the U.S. based on that initial information alone.

A number of Cubans were identified as homosexual upon arriving in the United States. They were unaware of U.S. immigration laws forbidding the entry of homosexuals. Gay Cubans were singled out for expulsion as part of the boatlift.

In a letter to Jeff Levi, Washington Representative of the National Gay Task Force, and Craig Howell, Immigration Project Coordinator of the Gay Rights National Lobby, INS Deputy Assistant Commissioner R. Michael Miller said: "This Service realizes that due to a variety of reasons, some 'Marielitos' were erroneously identified as being homosexual during initial interviews which occurred shortly after their arrival in the United States.

"Information contained in Service records, although given consideration, will not be the sole basis to deny any alien's application for adjustment of status, nor will extraneous documents or statements made by other persons. No alien will be considered ineligible for adjustment of status on the basis of sexual preference unless he/she makes or has made for the record an unequivocal, unambiguous declaration that he/she is a homosexual."

This approach is in accordance with current operating procedures at INS regarding entry of homosexuals to the U.S. NGTF and GRNL continue to urge gay/lesbian entrants to be discrete in their statements to INS officials to avoid difficulty.

"As abhorrent as this policy may be," Levi and Howell said, "at least it allows most gays to enter the U.S. It will take a change in the immigration laws through legislative means to completely eliminate this unjustified singling out of gay men and lesbians for discrimination."

west hollywood mayor under investigation

WEST HOLLYWOOD — Valerie Terrigno, this newly-incorporated city's lesbian mayor, is being investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation on the basis of allegations that she mishandled federal funds while directing a social service organization.

According to the Los Angeles *Times*, federal officials are looking into Terrigno's actions as head of Crossroads Counseling Service, an organization that folded last December, apparently due to lack of funds. Crossroads was formed in 1982 to provide job counselling services and emergency housing to low income persons, including lesbians and gay men in Hollywood and areas surrounding Los Angeles.

According to the Washington *Blade*, a statement released February 7 by Terrigno's office says, "I do not believe I have done anything to warrant an investigation." Terrigno resigned as director of Crossroads last September to become a candidate for West Hollywood's City Council.

West Hollywood elected a city council of five last fall, three of whom are openly gay or lesbian. Terrigno, one of the three, was chosen by the other councilors to serve as the city's first mayor.

too many gay complaints?

SAN FRANCISCO — The Office of Citizen Complaints (OCC) here has dismissed hundreds of cases, many of which concern anti-gay discrimination, because it cannot handle the backlog, according to the *Bay Area Reporter*. Many people who had filed complaints about police misconduct have received letter from OCC director Frank J. Schober informing them that their cases were closed.

Robert Bryant, a gay man who received a dismissal notice on December 28, believes "It's really an administrative way of circumventing the law." Bryant's formal complaint says he and a friend were detained for jaywalking on March 16, 1984, called "faggots" by the police officers detaining them, jailed for five hours and later charged with drunkenness although never given a sobriety test.

if this is justice...

WASHINGTON, DC — The Justice Department's Civil Rights Division filed suit on March 11 charging that the District of Columbia Fire Department's affirmative action program discriminated against white people by giving preference to people of color in promotions, according to the Boston *Globe*. The suit is the latest in a series of suits aimed at dismantling affirmative action program programs across the country.

The suit is also in line with a June 1984 Supreme Court decision that white firefighters in Memphis, Tenn. could not be laid off to protect jobs held by less senior Black firefighters.

The Administration complaint said that the District of Columbia program "constitute[s] a pattern and practice of resistance to the full enjoyment of the right of all applicants for employment and candidates for promotion to equal employment opportunities within the District of Columbia Fire Department."

The District of Columbia Fire Department currently has 780 white officers and only 494 Black officers although Black people make up approximately 64 percent of the district's population.

marielitos quarantined in cuba

HAVANA — Terrified and ill-informed about AIDS, Cuban officials are holding Cuban refugees being sent back to the island from the U.S. in quarantine, according to the Chicago *Tribune*.

The first 23 of 2,746 refugees Cuba agreed to take back were reportedly handcuffed upon arrival in Cuba on February 21, and were chained around the ankles. All 2,746 of the returning refugees are to be quarantined indefinitely.

Cuban officials say AIDS has not yet been detected in Cuba and they intend to keep it out. The quarantine action is apparently based on the belief that homosexuality is widespread in U.S. prisons where some of the refugees have spent close to five years.

The refugees Cuba has agreed to accept for return are described by American officials as the criminals or mental patients among the 125,000 people who sailed for the U.S. from the port of Mariel in 1980.

Many gay men were expelled from Cuba at that time. U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Services laws would mandate sending openly gay Cuban refugees back to Cuba.

appeal granted in prison censorship of gay books, but...

PHILADELPHIA — The Regional Director of the Federal Bureau of Prisons, Z. Stephen Grzegorek, has granted permission for prisoners at Allenwood Federal Prison Camp to receive 11 publications with gay/lesbian content previously rejected by the Allenwood Superintendent, D.T. Lansing.

In a letter dated February 15, 1985, to Stefan Presser, the Legal Director of the American Civil Liberties Union of Pennsylvania, Grzegorek accepted the 11, but confirmed the rejection of *Shuttlecock* by Phil Andros. Grzegorek said the latter "contains sexually explicit material which by its nature and content poses a threat to the security, good order and discipline of the prison camp at Allenwood. The book is repleat with description of explicit homosexual oral and anal encounters. We cannot permit *Shuttlecock* to be received at Allenwood."

The 12 publications, including the ACLU's handbook, *The Rights of Gay People*, had been sent to an Allenwood prisoner in December 1984 by Giovanni's Room, Philadelphia's lesbian, feminist and gay men's bookstore. The ACLU represented Giovanni's Room in appealing the rejections.

The Regional Director's decision conforms with the Federal Bureau of Prisons' guidelines allowing gay material that is not sexually explicit, but rejecting gay material that is sexually explicit. Non-gay sexually explicit material is allowed.

ACLU Legal Director Stefan Presser said that the ACLU is involved in a case in Washington, D.C., that would end discrimination against sexually explicit gay material.

Giovanni's Room partner Ed Hermance noted that heterosexual video pornography is displayed by vendors at conferences for federal prison officials and questioned whether lesbian scenes for straight men's consumption are included in the federal prohibition of sexually explicit gay material.

squat, press, lift

BOSTON — The South End Gym sponsored the fourth Amazon-Adonis Powerlifting Meet on Saturday, March 2. Susan Cayouette won the women's division with a 255 lb. squat, 115 lb. bench press and 330 lb. dead lift at 139 lbs. bodyweight.

Peter Vuono won the men's division with a squat of 510 lbs., bench of 300 lbs. and deadlift 575 lbs. at 207 lbs. bodyweight.

Larry Ball set a new drug-free Massachusetts record of 330 lbs. in the bench press.

responding to discrimination

BOSTON — A group of gay and lesbian activists is undertaking a project to document racial and sexual discrimination at Boston-area gay and lesbian bars. Henry Chinn of the Black Men's Association said that he, Ann Maguire, the mayoral liaison to the gay/lesbian community, and representatives of El Comite Latino de lesbianas y homosexuals de Boston, and Black & White Men Together had a meeting to organize the documentation of discrimination at bars, as well as a systematic response to it.

Chinn said that while the organizing is in its initial stages, the group has tentatively proposed a three-prong approach: solicit the help and support of other organizations with the goal of establishing a multi-racial effort; gather data on the incidence of discrimination by setting up a hotline to receive complaints; take steps to change bar policies through negotiation or filing formal complaints with the city Licensing Board or organizing community boycotts.

For the moment, the ad hoc committee on bar discrimination is seeking endorsements from other groups and individuals who are interested in working with the committee. For information or to volunteer, contact Henry Chinn at 353-0719 or Ann Maguire at 725-3307.

oh, your honor

WASHINGTON, DC — Judge Albert B. Fletcher Jr. of the U.S. Military Court of Appeals was convicted on February 27 of soliciting sex from a male undercover Fairfax County police officer last October, according to the Washington *Post*.

Fifteen other men were arrested during the same operation in what police described as a crackdown on homosexual activity near the Belle Haven Marina south of Alexandria. Fletcher maintains he is innocent.

Fletcher can be removed from the bench by President Reagan only for "neglect of duty or malfeasance in office or for mental or physical disability" according to federal law. White House officials had no comment on the case.

Women of Color Discuss Direction, Priorities

By Pam Mitchell

A racially mixed crowd of between 75 and a hundred people gathered in the International Lounge at Brandeis University on March 5 for a panel discussion on "Women of Color in the '80s: priorities, issues and directions." Black lesbian activist Barbara Smith delivered the keynote speech, in which she described the expanding Third World feminist movement and discussed some of the obstacles to that movement's continued growth, focusing in particular on racism and homophobia.

Smith's talk was followed by brief responses from other members of the panel and then by questions from the audience. The other panelists were Cheryl A. Boudreau-Mensah, a Black graduate student in anthropology at Brandeis; Jasmine Tulier of the Boston battered women's shelter, Casa Myrna Vasquez; May Louie, organization secretary for the Rainbow Coalition and an activist in the Boston Chinese community; and Ora Gladstone, of Brandeis Hillel, a long-time activist currently participating in a Jewish-Black dialogue on the Brandeis campus.

Smith began her talk by expressing regret that the audience hadn't been able to share in the "rousing discussion" of the evening's topic which had ensued when the panelists met over dinner earlier in the evening; she said that lively discussion was another indication that "we have a movement."

I want to concentrate on the joyful topic of women of color feminism and leave racism for white people to discuss.

She said she wants to concentrate her energies on the "joyful topic" of the creation of women of color feminism, and would like as much as possible to leave the topic of racism to white people to discuss, since dealing with racism and privilege "go with the territory" of being white. "I don't often talk about racism anymore," she said, "because it's not my job. But," she added, stressing that white people must take anti-racist action, "these are serious times."

She reported that when the panelists compared notes about their lives in the Boston area in the dinner-table conversation before the forum, they all had a lot of stories to tell about the increasing poverty and racist violence in their own communities. White people must become conscious of the impact of racism on people's lives and must decide what actions to take, not out of charity but in the interests of "creating a decent world," Smith said. As one example, she urged whites to consider the impact of gentrification on people of color when moving into "new" (to whites) neighborhoods. She said that at dinner she and other panel participants discussed how they had all been squeezed out of Boston's South End at some time.

Smith described how women of color feminism has grown from a few "voices crying in the wilderness" in the early '70s to a "real movement" by the '80s. There are now large numbers of Third World feminists "defining our own movement," she said, "though we don't get a lot of media coverage" from the white press. The creation of autonomous Third World media is another sign of the vitality of the movement, she said. Leafing through the first issue of the new women of color newspaper *Between Our Selves*, based in Washington, D.C., she asked, "In 1970 or 1973, did I ever think I'd be holding a paper like this in my hands?"

Smith said the new movement includes many women of color who "may not call themselves feminists but when you're sitting in the room with them they come through." She said she has trouble identifying with the label of "feminist" herself when it "includes 'white' in parenthesis," but has no such reservations when feminism is infused with the particular worldview and priorities of Black feminism, or Third World feminism.

When speaking of "Third World feminism," Smith stressed that it must be regarded as one noun, one entity — the words "Third World" are not just optional adjectives modifying (white) feminism. She said that Third World feminism includes a "multi-issue perspective." The concept of "manifold and simultaneous oppressions" — that someone who is a member of more than one oppressed group will experience those multiple oppressions at the same time and inseparably and will have particular insight and perspective because of this — has been "the crux" of the theoretical contribution of Third World feminists.

Though Third World feminists have gotten little credit or media attention for it, Smith said, it was actually women of color who began discussing the concept of coalition later exemplified "very publicly" by the rainbow coalitions of Mel King and Jesse Jackson. While she praised King as a radical and activist who has acknowledged women of color and helped move their work forward, Smith characterized Jack-

son as "a politician, ...not a progressive," who has borrowed the coalition concept.

Smith went on to quote a passage from the Black feminist anthology *Home Girls* in which Bernice Johnson Reagon describes coalition as neither a comfortable place nor a home, but as something participants join because if they don't link up, they "stand to be killed." As an example of this, Smith cited the significant number of people of color who have become involved in disarmament and anti-nuke work, since the issue affects everyone's survival, though "it's not people of color who are making the nuclear reactors" or raiding Native American lands and trading with South Africa for the fuel to run them; "basically, it's Protestant males" who have done so.

She added that people of color are "more likely to die today from police brutality" than from nuclear disaster.

Smith also touched on the problems that can arise when women from different communities of color attempt to overcome the barriers that have been erected between them by racism and isolation to work together. As an example during the question and answer period, she described difficulties that developed at Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press, an institution Smith helped found. Although intended as a joint effort, many women of color have left amid a lot of tension so that the Press is now functionally a predominantly Black enterprise. "I will admit my ig-

norance" about other women of color, she said, and will work to overcome that ignorance in the interests of future coalition. She said she places highest priority on such work, and expressed optimism that differences can be overcome.

As one case in which homophobia could divide women of color, and one which represents a particular challenge to Black women, Smith discussed the dilemma posed by the U.N. End of the Women's Decade Conference scheduled to occur in Kenya in July of 1985. The Kenyan government has announced it intends to arrest any lesbians, or even any political feminists, who come to Kenya to attend the conference. This is not an issue other women of color can be held accountable for, Smith said, but "how are Afro-American women going to act," she asked, "when they start trying to arrest us, ...within the family, ...in a country from which we came?" Black women have to be willing to say, "This is not going to wash any more."

In response to a question from the audience later, panelists discussed in more detail how the Kenyan government has been working to undermine the conference. There will actually be two separate conferences, as there were in

People of color are more likely to die today from police brutality than from nuclear disaster.

1975 and 1980 — one for official government delegations (Maureen Reagan will head the U.S. delegation) and an unofficial conference expected to draw feminist activists from around the world. The Kenya government recently arbitrarily changed the dates of the unofficial conference to run concurrently with the official one, meaning that issues raised at the unofficial conference will get less attention and have less potential influence on the official delegations. The sudden change also wreaks havoc with long-established reservations and travel plans, and means many women will not be able to attend at all.

Smith concluded her talk by encouraging Third World gay men and lesbians to continue working against homophobia both inside and outside of communities of color. She said that because of heavy pressure from Gil Gerald and the National Coalition of Black Gays, Jesse Jackson was pushed to talk about gay issues and even to say the words — not just gay, she noted, but lesbian as well — at the Democratic Convention, and that kind of pressure and encouragement must continue.

In their brief statements, other panelists referred to Smith's remarks about homophobia only briefly and anecdotally. Tulier opened by telling about how she had been raised by nuns and had been ignorant about gayness until a coworker named Gloria came out to her and educated her about it. A few minutes later, Gladstone quipped, "My Gloria was a Susan!" and told a similar story.

The response to Smith's remarks about Third World feminism and racism were more detailed, however. Boudreau-Mensah appreciated the people of color in the audience, since she said that as an academic she "spends most of my time looking into crowds and not seeing anyone who looks

like me."

She talked about the insensitivity and odd twist of thinking that has allowed some white people to suggest that her chances of getting jobs are actually *increased* by being Black and female. She said she never went out of her way to be either a radical or a feminist, but since the label of "radical feminist" has gotten applied to her as "natural outgrowth of wanting what I deserve," she is proud to wear the label.

Gladstone said her own oppression as a Jew, though not equivalent or comparable to the experience of a person of color in this society, "has given me some sensitivity to others' oppression." She stressed the need to "form coalitions that are going to work," describing coalition work she



Barbara Smith speaking at Brandeis

was involved in several years ago in Boston which dissolved when the people of color withdrew in frustration.

She said recent Black/Jewish dialogue at Brandeis has been very problematic, running aground around such thorny, "two-sided" issues as Palestine and affirmative action, but she feels hopeful about that dialogue expanding to incorporate other people of color in addition to Black people.

May Louie put the struggles of people of color in the U.S. into the context of a worldwide Third World movement. She said that because of racism and national chauvinism, white people in the U.S. are frightened by the real gains being made by Third World countries, and this is part of the reason for the Reaganite backlash.

"I will not call myself a feminist," Louie said, but instead labels herself an "internationalist." Though she does stand for the rights of women, she "stand[s] absolutely on the rights of nationalities" because Third World issues are "the definition of our lives." Communities of color as a whole have needs similar to women of color, including the need to open up the political system, to make fundamental economic changes, and to fight for cultural and language rights. She said because of gerrymandering of Boston City Council districts, "Chinese do not have a vote in Boston," and that other communities of color are underrepresented. Affirmative action and comparable worth and daycare are important issues for all people in communities of color. Boston's Asian community is in a particular crisis now because the garment industry, the major employer of Asian-American working-class women, has been leaving the region. While an organized response within the community has helped many unemployed Asians find work in the many new hotels being built in Boston, these are mostly seasonal, minimum-wage jobs.

Referring to Smith's remarks about gentrification, Louie said new plans to "develop" areas near Chinatown and the Black neighborhoods in the Dudley area of Roxbury need an organized response; "the fact that we let the South End go was the beginning of the end of Roxbury," she said.

During the question-and-answer period, a white woman thanked the panel for "teaching me more about the lives of women of color in one evening than I've learned during my whole time at Brandeis." Barbara Smith stressed that as an autonomous Third World feminist movement develops, "we determine the agenda," and women of color will participate in greater and greater numbers.

NY Baths

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gay community organizations, and can be appropriately treated as such. "Three years into this epidemic," Callen writes, "free condoms and safer-sex education materials are not routinely handed to each and every patron as he enters. This is, of course, a scandal which justifies threats of license revocation."

Both mayor Ed Koch and City

Health Commissioner David Sencer say they oppose forced closure of the baths. But Callen told *GCN* that only closure threats will bring about a uniform response. "If both the state and the city say, 'We will never close the bathhouses,' then where is the motivation for owners to deal with their negligence?"

But others take a dim view of governmental intervention. "The whole point here is that it's much better for the community to deal with it than having the govern-

ment stick its nose in. Governmental intervention opens us up to all kinds of abuses on the civil rights front," Tim Sweeney of Lambda said.

Sweeney described sex education efforts in the baths as a way "to reach men who don't think of themselves as gay and, therefore, don't perceive any risk for themselves in certain sexual practices." He said bath owners need help and funding to implement the Coalition's suggestions. "God knows nobody in this society

knows how to go about doing sex education."

David Nimmons expressed confidence that the Coalition's 15 members represent a cross-section of opinions on bathhouse sex. "We raised questions ourselves about whether we had the moral and political authority to do this.... But I feel comfortable that this is as broad a consensus on this issue as I've seen yet."

— filed from Boston

Rally

Continued from page 1

commitment to fight racism, to build a women's movement committed to taking on issues such as forced sterilization of Puerto Rican women and high infant mortality in the Black community. Finally, the rally closed with a powerful demonstration of women's martial arts performed against a backdrop of pictures of women freedom fighters from Africa, Puerto Rico, and Central America.

Community Voices

GCN welcomes letters to the editor. If possible, they should be **TYPED** and **DOUBLESPOCED**, and where possible limited to five typed pages. They should be sent to: **Community Voices, GCN, 167 Tremont St. #5, Boston, MA 02111.**

going to prison to escape home

Dear *GCN*,

After reading through the books you [the GCN Prisoner Project] sent and the xeroxed articles, I am deeply compelled to put down my story of just how and why I am here. Hopefully to help others.

I was a student in high school when I first found out what sex was. It happened to be with a man 40 years older than me, but he opened my eyes and my sexuality. This went on for 2 years, our sneaking away for a few moments of love. Then my mom found out and she had him arrested and because I refused to testify he was released.

But then my mother did all she could to get me to change, from seeing psychiatrists to being overly strict and keeping me in the house when not at school. This effectively stopped all sex and love until I reached college (still living at home). There I learned bathroom sex, as the libraries of many colleges are where the gay bathrooms are located. These were quickies and usually anonymous, but little is better than none. I went to college not for the education but to get away from home and have a sex life of my own. My mother was so hell bent on changing me that she thought she was doing right.

When frustrations had built up so far I had to have a release, that release was "crime," even though I never harmed anyone. What I did was to set a storage building on fire. I willingly gave a confession to the police so that they could take me away from home. Where I didn't care — just away. I couldn't leave home because my parents used force and kept my money. (My mother's side of the family is mafia-related and not to be offended.)

So off I went to prison, not realizing the terrible mistake that was, but at the time it looked like the lesser of two evils. Even though I was considered educated (with some college), I was really ignorant. I am old fashioned (about drugs, alcohol, etc.) so prison was really a shock. And being a young white guy with a large ass and a soft body, I was attacked and raped and then put into "protective" custody (isolation; no exercise, library privileges, etc.). Then I was transferred to another prison and was fortunate to meet a wonderful guy who took me under his wing and taught me all about law and to stand up for my rights and those of others — for me to use my education to help all. I began to do this and in return I obtained some respect from other inmates. But I lost all respect from the police. They did what they could to harm me and dissuade me from suing them. And I was transferred to another prison — a white racist prison in Hagerstown [Maryland].

While there I became interested in Blacks and became lovers with a really nice man, who stayed with me through the harassment, beatings and outright torture, even though he lost his parole date and I was put in isolation. So I have another law suit against them, because now I am convinced that I can never give up my fight for gay rights and the rights of Blacks. They are treated as second class citizens in prison. I know that I may be killed in the process because several major cases are coming up for trial in the near future, but I have found my niche in life.

I am lucky to have some education, because I am able to use it to my advantage over the generally uneducated police. I have a few prisoner friends here who have remained loyal even though I am so unpopular with the police, but they can be counted on. If all gays would stand up together as well as all Blacks, we would get somewhere. I have never fought a fight physically. I like peace and quiet. But I have come from a shy, backwards person into an aggressive fighter. I don't hesitate to speak up for a wrong that needs to be righted. I have now stood up to my parents and demanded that they accept my gayness. I would like to live with my man from Hagerstown but he is not accepting of his own gayness so our sexual relationship was extremely inhibited.

I haven't met Mr. Right but when I do I know the bells will go off in my head. I would be more than happy to hear from any of you readers who wish to offer advice or who need legal assistance. I can receive letters from other prisoners without problem. I'm not a legal expert myself, but do know something and would help where I could.

Prison was really not the place for me to go maybe, but I have made a go of it anyway. I have the physical scars from beatings and stabbings to remind me that I should never give up but go on. I hope that one day all racism and prejudice will disappear, but that day is a long way off. Like the song, though, "it only takes a spark to make a fire." I hope to be one of many sparks.

Sincerely,
Gene Munnings
Box 700, 5997
Jessup, MD 20794

more, not less, action

Dear *GCN*:

I have read Philip Willkie's petulant letter in the January 19 *GCN*. The first reply that comes to mind when he accuses the Gay Rights Movement of being the change straight people movement is that Gay political action need not be limited to within-the-system, moderate, Uncle Tom Tactics. The fight for our rights can also include demonstrations, sit-ins, boycotts, civil disobedience and even the more violent tactics used during the '60s. However, what Willkie is saying is that if we really didn't care what straight people thing of us, we wouldn't bother to use either the moderate or militant approach because they could no longer hurt us.

Needless to say, this is absurd. A queer basher's club shattering our skull will hurt no matter what we care about their opinions of us. Being thrown into a Nazi oven or burned at the stake would hurt even more. Even being fired from a job and being unable to afford food and shelter as a result will hurt.

Willkie is expressing the views of a cult that has attracted a certain number of followers in the Twin Cities. However, if there had not been a Gay Liberation Movement, they would never even have formed the idea of Gay Pride from which they now condemn Gay Liberation.

Since Phil Willkie has written articles in the Twin Cities Gay and Lesbian press stating he is a Gay alcoholic, I am not breaking any confidence by mentioning it here. I mention it in order to point out that if there had been no Gay Liberation Movement, there would now be no Gay and Lesbian chemical dependency counselling organizations. And if Gay and Lesbian Rights Ordinances are repealed, landlords could refuse to rent to such organizations. If public attitudes were as backward now as they were in the early sixties, such organizations would never be able to rent space even if they had come into existence without the Gay political movements.

The views that Willkie expressed have gained a certain following because of frustration over the failures of the Gay Liberation Movement. The conservative, moderate approach that is the strongest tendency in our movement has failed to win our rights. More militant tactics would work but, in the present political climate, not enough people will participate in them for them to be effective. The high degree of infighting in Gay and Lesbian politics also contribute to the frustration. Views like Willkie's are an attempt to withdraw from this situation by cultivating an interior, mystical state of Gay Pride.

Actually, the views expressed in Willkie's letter only compound the problem for, in the Twin Cities at least, they have pulled many promising militants out of the fight for our rights.

Changing straight people's views need not involve crawling before straights and begging them not to hurt us. It can involve Gays learning the martial arts so we can beat the shit out of hoods that assault us or trashing employers or landlords that fire or evict us. Of course, if we can beat up assailants against us, we are better off even if their attitudes don't change, but surely there is no lack of Gay Pride in realizing that if their attitudes change to being afraid to attack us in the first place, we are even better off. If their prejudice disappears entirely after they realize they can no longer run over us, that is even better.

If the Kinsey statistics are to be believed, there are twenty-three million of us in this country alone. If we all wrote letters demanding a Gay and Lesbian Rights Bill, we would have it. If we all took to the streets, we could have anything we wanted. We could still have it even if only ninety percent of us became politically active. In spite of the frustrations of organizing the Gay Community, we should always keep before our minds the fact that Gays and Lesbians have the power to win our freedom anytime we want it badly enough.

Sincerely,
Robert Halfhill
Minneapolis, MN

i share it with my sisters

Dear *GCN*,

Well, I received my sample issue of the paper and wanted to make sure to drop you a line letting you know that I did and would like to continue to receive it.

I share it with my sisters and we all find it very interesting. The articles of your paper have been talked about and debated throughout the institution since it arrived.

I would like to continue to receive it and plan to be a proud, paid subscriber once I leave this place.

Thank you,
Laina L. Guist
Box 971 Cty Hy K
Taycheeday, WI 54935

solidarity 1

Dear *GCN*,

I'm writing to let you know that I'm no longer at the Southeastern Prison at Bridgewater.

Because I dared to protect a younger gay man from the beatings of older straight prisoners, I was re-classified as a trouble maker and shipped to Walpole.

If I had the resources to take these people to court, I'd do it in a minute. That's why the prison system gets away with murder. Ninety-nine percent of the people behind bars are poor. You don't see many wealthy men or women doing time.

Anyway, if the guards at Bridgewater had been doing their jobs, they'd have protected that gay man and I wouldn't have gotten involved. But because he was gay they turned their backs on him.

It pisses me off that these punks never had the courage to fuck with me, and I'm very open about being gay. I'm sure it's my size and build that discourage them, but that only goes to show what cowards they are. It's really easy for them to pick on a young (19 yrs old) gay guy that only weighs 120 pounds.

Well, anyway, I'd also really appreciate it if you'd put my address in your penpal column.

It's really great knowing that you people are out there and that you care!

Stay strong,
Bart Albano
Box 100
So. Walpole, MA 02071

solidarity 2

Dear *GCN*,

I have no objections if you'd like to print my letter about the Bridgewater incident, and no problems with you using my name or prison. Maybe I'd get a penpal!

Could you rewrite it so it sounds a little more together? I mean spelling, complete sentences etc.

In that letter I attacked the guards for not protecting that younger gay, and with good cause. But I'll tell you, Mike, the straight prisoners are the real pieces of shit behind bars when it comes to how they treat some of the weaker inmates, mostly the feminine gays, who can't hide their homosexuality as well as others.

This isn't the first fight I had under these circumstances. I had a similar beef at Concord Prison. Three inmates had a 17-year-old kid cornered in a bathroom over in the gym building ready to gang rape him. When I walked in to use the bathroom, I caught the horrified look in the young man's eyes and I asked him if he was okay. He just started crying. I threw a punch at the asshole closest to me, and the other two left quickly. The guy I punched went right to the guards.

I, of course, had nothing to say to the guards, because I didn't want it spread around the prison that this kid is gay. So I kept my mouth shut and ended-up doing 30 days in the hole [isolation].

The 17 and 18-year-olds should be in a place of their own, not mixed in with older prisoners, especially when it comes to young gays. To be honest with you though, I don't see the prison system changing any time soon (unless people get involved).

But on a lighter note, that kid I fought for at Bridgewater is over here with me now... Free people will never know just how great a hug and kiss really can be until they're without them for as long as we behind bars have been. We may both be out in less than two years. Needless to say, I'm very hopeful!

If you should come across a book that deals with sign language for the deaf, I could really use it. I'm teaching this deaf guy here so he can earn his G.E.D. and me learning the sign language would be very helpful. Right now we communicate with paper and pen. It's hard, but we manage.

Well, thanks again for all your support!
Bart Albano
Box 100
So. Walpole, MA 02071

why, ted?

(*GCN received a copy of this letter to ABC Nightline host Ted Koppel.—Ed.*)

Dear Ted Koppel:

I have always enjoyed your Nightline programs; nobody in America is fairer and more professional than you.

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However, last night, you let us down — millions of us.

Your company had the courage to air *Consenting Adult* but then lost courage to air a follow-up on gayness.

Ted, you missed the chance of reaching millions of people who were receptive to the idea that homosexuality is equal to other forms of human sexuality.

WHY, TED?

Martin Thomas
Chicago, IL

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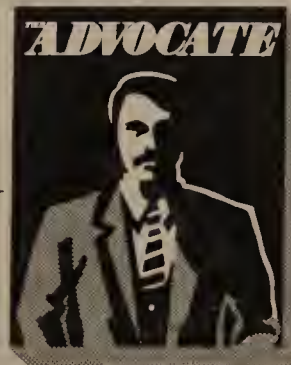
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Mixed Results Found in Boston HTLV-III Project

By Sue Hyde

BOSTON — Good news and bad news can be found in the recently-published results of a research project which tested the blood of 160 local healthy gay men and found that four out of five showed no evidence of exposure to HTLV-III, the virus believed to cause AIDS.

The good news: Boston's figure of 21 percent exposure is about half that found in San Francisco's healthy gay male population, which shows an exposure rate of nearly 40 percent.

The bad news: "It's still a lot of people," said Larry Kessler, coordinator of the AIDS Action Committee. As far as Kessler is concerned, safe sex guidelines still apply to gay male sexual activity.

Both Kessler and Dr. Ken Mayer, researcher in the study and the research director at the Fenway Community Health Center, were very cautious in their interpretations of the results. Kessler said, "This [relatively low] level of exposure is no reason to take chances. It's even more reason to be careful." And Mayer, in a phone interview with GCN, explained that since scientists understand so little about AIDS, the name of the game for high-risk groups, especially gay men, is reducing the chances for exposure to the virus. "If I knew I had a one in five chance of getting a lethal disease," he said, "I'd be concerned about it. This is not a signal for people to go out and screw around. Nothing in the study implies that people don't need to care."

About 150 cases of AIDS have been reported in the greater Boston area; 90 cases in the city itself. Health officials anticipate that figure will more than double in 1985. In San Francisco, about 1000 AIDS cases have been reported. New York has borne the brunt of the epidemic, with about 3000 cases out of a national total of over 8400. Seventy-three percent of all people with AIDS are gay or bisexual men.

The Boston research results, published in the March issue of *Annals of Internal Medicine* and reported in the March 11 edition of the *Boston Globe*, were obtained in an epidemiological study of gay men recruited from the Fenway Community Health Center and New England Deaconess Hospital. Dr. Jerome Groopman of Deaconess also served as a principal researcher.

The blood of 45 men with AIDS and 78 men with persistent but unexplained swollen lymph glands (lymphadenopathy), as well as 160

men showing no symptoms of either disease, was tested for the presence of the HTLV-III antibody. Of the 45 men with AIDS, all but one showed evidence of exposure to the virus; of the 78 men, with persistent lymphadenopathy, 91 percent carried the HTLV-III antibody.

The blood samples were drawn and tested in the winter of 1984, making the data a year old. Ken Mayer told GCN that a second study is underway to determine if the virus has become more widespread in the past year. He declined to speculate on the figures which may result from this year's study, but said analysis will begin in late April.

Mayer stressed the need for a series of epidemiological studies, ideally to be conducted on 1000 gay men tested every six months for five years. He doubts that such a study would ever be funded, or if funded, that willing subjects could be found to participate.

Recruiting, he said, has been a problem. He and other researchers have encountered a reluctant population of gay men, mistrustful of the possible use of the HTLV-III test as a marker of homosexuality and doubtful of the clinical significance of the test results. Gay organizations and activists all across the country have advised gay men not to take the

Continued on page 10

Baltimore Council Defeats Rights Bill

By Gary Coberly

BALTIMORE — On the evening of February 19, the Baltimore City Council defeated by a vote of 11-7 a hard-fought bill which would have outlawed anti-gay/lesbian discrimination in the areas of employment, public accommodations, education and health and welfare services.

Many in the Baltimore gay and lesbian community expressed outrage at this wimpering end to their 11-month battle for equal rights. Nearly 100 angry protesters marched before the doors of City Hall on the following evening carrying signs that sharply criticized councilmembers and Mayor Donald Schaefer. Schaefer made no public statement about the bill, nor did his appointed liaison to the gay and lesbian community, Hilda Ford, appear at any council meetings or demonstrations.

In addition, the Baltimore Civil Rights Coalition for Council Bill 187 claimed there was a general lack of leadership on the part of the city officials who supported the bill. Although five councilmembers sponsored the bill, "there was no one councilperson to shepherd the bill through council," said Jenny Boyd Bull, one of the four lobbyists for the bill.

Councilmember Thomas J.S. Waxter Jr. of the Fifth District, a sponsor of the bill and head of the Policy and Planning Committee to which it was assigned, held the bill in committee for nearly 11 months in an effort to gain the necessary ten votes. Even so, the bill went to a vote with at least four swing

votes. "Waxter's strategy was ineffective," said Bull.

Several councilmembers expected to vote in favor of C.B. 187 said they would not commit to either side until the vote.

Waxter also attempted to assuage certain councilmembers' reservations by amending the bill to allow employers to implement a dress code or code of conduct and to permit the firing of an employee working with minors if the employee "advocates" homosexuality or bisexuality.

Many lesbian and gay activists said they would rather have no bill than one so amended. However, the amendments were ultimately defeated before the bill came to a vote.

Councilor Jody Landers of the Third District, for whom the amendments had been important, surprised many by voting for the bill without amendments. Reading aloud the dictionary definition of discrimination, Landers said, "I can find no other way to vote."

Two other Third District Councilors were strongly against the bill, insisting that "gays seek preferential treatment."

The Fourth District all voted yes. "I'm opposed to homosexuality, but I'm more opposed to discrimination," said Councilor Kweisi Mfune. Councilor Agnes Welch, who had just come from an anti-apartheid demonstration, noted she could not oppose discrimination far away and ignore that in her own city.

Continued on page 12

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Please call Teri Freeman, M.Ed. at GLCS for more information.

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Non-Partisan Agency Slams Insufficient AIDS Support

By Christine Guilfooy

WASHINGTON, DC — The Office of Technology Assessment (OTA) has issued a report critical of the Reagan administration's response to the AIDS epidemic. While the report reiterates criticisms already levelled by the gay community and members of Congress, it is the first report issued by an independent agency detailing governmental response to the AIDS crisis.

The report was requested by two House committees which held hearings on the report's findings on February 21. The 158-page report roundly criticizes the present administration for failure to request sufficient funds for AIDS research, for neglecting to provide primary health care services for people with AIDS, and for failing to provide funds for education of high risk groups and the public at large.

The report was requested by the House Subcommittee on Inter-governmental Relations and Human Resources, chaired by Rep. Ted Weiss (D-NY), and the House Energy and Commerce Committee. The OTA is described as a "non-partisan analytical agency that assists Congress in dealing with complex and technical issues confronting our society."

The report focuses on the super-agency of Health and Human Services (HHS) and on some of the agencies it embodies, most notably the Public Health Service (PHS) and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC).

Acknowledging that the report reiterates allegations already made in Congress and by the gay community, a spokesperson for Weiss's office said, however, that the report lends new credibility to the complaints because OTA is independent and nonpartisan. Jeff Levi of the Washington office of the National Gay Task Force (NGTF) agreed, saying, "The

OTA gives a sense of legitimacy.... It states how serious the AIDS crisis is becoming — from an independent, uninvolved agency."

The report highlights the following:

- The Reagan administration's funding requests for AIDS research are consistently lower than what the health agencies say they need. Congress has consistently appropriated more funds to meet some of the shortfall in the cost of governmental AIDS research.

- The administration, in the person of HHS Secretary Margaret Heckler, failed to provide additional money when requested by the PHS. The PHS was instead ordered to make up any shortfalls by taking the money from other PHS programs.

- The administration has failed to draw on a discretionary \$30 million health emergency fund.

- The administration's reluctance to give funding priority to health has resulted in the PHS' inability to plan future programs because of questions about future funding.

- The administration's personnel cuts in PHS have had a detrimental effect on AIDS research.

- Secretary Heckler has overstated the usefulness of the HTLV-III antibody test and committed the government to its development and use before sufficient information on the test was available. The report also criticizes her inattentiveness to the problems inherent in the test.

- The administration has failed to provide sufficient money to fund primary care for people with AIDS.

- The administration has not provided adequate money to educate high risk groups and the public at large about AIDS transmissibility. The OTA speculates that educational shortfalls may be due to the administration's biases

against the high risk groups, most notably IV drug users and gay men. (This allegation is repeated in a forthcoming *Mother Jones* article in which former HHS Assistant Secretary Edward Brandt is quoted as saying talk of quarantines and mass firings of gay men occurred at the highest levels of the Reagan administration.)

NGTF's Levi told *GCN* the CDC has four million dollars available to spend on education. However, he said, large portions of that money have gone towards implementing the HTLV-III antibody test. "Out of the \$4 million, not even half goes to real prevention education," summarized Levi.

One of the more interesting things to come out of the hearings, Levi said, was how money is appropriated, which he described as a "process which works from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) on down rather than from the people on the line, on up." According to Levi, the OMB determines how much money of the total budget will go to health, and appropriates accordingly. There is no meaningful scientific input into the amount of money needed.

Appearing at the Congressional hearings on behalf of the administration was James Mason, the head of the CDC who is temporarily acting as assistant secretary of HHS, the position formerly held by Edward Brandt.

— filed from Boston

CORRECTION

In the second to last paragraph of Bob Nelson's story on licensing of the HTLV-III test, Vol. 12, No. 34, a quote from Dr. John Petricciani should read, "We can't prevent inappropriate use of it..." rather than, "We can prevent...."

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Apples and Pears and Other Stories

Guy Davenport
North Point Press, San Francisco, 1984
\$20.00, 296 pp.

Reviewed by Scott Tucker

"Apple and pear," writes Guy Davenport in the title story of his new collection of fiction, "come into history when there are orchards, brick walls...." And he goes on to mention the apples of which Sappho sang, as well as a time when people hung dolls "in the flowering pear." For myself, apples and pears have a particular sweetness and gravity. The summer before Davenport's book was published, my lover and I rested in an orchard of apples and pears within the walls of the old fortress town and prison of Terezin in Czechoslovakia. During the last world war, the Nazis had turned this place into a "model" Jewish ghetto and into a concentration camp. Not far from where we sat eating the fallen fruit they had dumped many corpses into a mass grave. Many thousands more — starved, shot, hanged, beaten, or dead of typhus — were disposed of at a nearby crematorium. To enjoy life, even there, paid as much tribute to the dead as the wildflowers I picked and laid at an execution wall.

In this century, certain grandiose lies and notions have done much damage, and some have learned to distrust the mind. Yet it remains important to exercise utopian imagination, not for pure escape or to play dictator, but to make decent change conceivable and possible.

Uneventful is the word for much of Davenport's fiction, if by events we mean marriage, divorce, suicide, murder, collision of characters, old secrets exposed, and high drama in general. He writes about friends and lovers who inhabit microcosms — a house or an island — which prefigure a utopian world. The nuclear arsenals of the U.S. and the Soviet Union shadow the little country where much of his fiction takes place, the Netherlands. His characters are only loosely attached to the middle class or have been saved from madness and the streets by guardian angels. They try to make love and work more harmonious. The last paragraph of *Apples and Pears* is titled "Everything Could Be Different," the undying utopian sentiment.

Davenport expects a lot from his readers. When reading a passage titled "Bodies and Pleasures," it is useful to have read Foucault's *History of Sexuality*; and it is useful to know the paintings of Magritte when another passage is titled "This Is Not A Pipe." Useful, but not essential. Davenport is multilingual, and he sometimes collages Dutch, French, Latin, and Greek in his prose, though sparingly, and most of the Dutch should make sense in context even to readers who know only English. I don't think Davenport is intentionally intimidating his readers, though he indulges in a degree of bravura. He is alternately contemplative and exuberant. A single sentence, like a string of mixed and precious beads, may bring together far-ranging facts and lore. Some readers may find patches of this prose too precious altogether, but most of it reads straightforwardly, and even the puzzles can be a pleasure.

The title story of *Apples and Pears* is composed of entries from the journal of a character who may well be the author's alter ego, and whom he first introduced in "The Dawn in Erewhon," a story included in *Tatlin!*, a previous collection of his fiction: "The Dutch philosopher Adriaan Floris van Hovendaal was arranging the objects on his table, a pinecone to remind him of Fibonacci, a snail's shell to remind him of Ruskin, a drachma to remind him of Crete." Pine cone, shell, drachma — this triad of tokens reappears in *Apples and Pears*, where Adriaan still pays great attention to worldly stuff, stuch charged with significance by a web of associations and analogies. Looking at the world with a passion for particulars and patterns is an erotic and philosophical activity; perhaps because the world and his responses to it are so various, Adriaan's own being never completely crystallizes. Adriaan writes, "Until identity by character absorbs again identity by sexuality we will suffer our present shallow sense of being, where psychology, looking at

nothing, thinks it sees everything."

It's not necessary to know Davenport's previous work to appreciate his novel-length title story, "Apples and Pears," but it is worth noting the continuation and variation of certain themes. Utopia, as Davenport's Adriaan conceives it, is the place where human creatures can be more civilized and sensual, the home where we can be more human and from which humanity is more or less exiled. More or less — depending on class, culture, and just plain luck. Luck is sometimes too easily equated with virtue in Davenport's fiction, and this flaws an otherwise admirable utopian perspective. The notion that luck is virtue is by no means simple, and has a long history. It even has this grain of truth in it: a certain amount of material and cultural luck is often conducive to the development of qualities like sensuality and sympathy. Utopia means nothing if it does not mean a time and a place where virtue and happiness are much more the common life of all folks, and much less the consequence of luck. Of course even in utopia human life will still have its tragic aspect. Luck can only be equated with virtue if chance is equated with some mystical form of choice. The virtue of luck is a metaphysical doctrine which has been most popular with the aristocracy, or those who aspire to be aristocrats. Doctrines which construct exclusive clubs on earth and in heaven have as many sources as there are ruling classes and religious sects; when they crop up among utopians, they do not cease to require critical examination.

Just as the presiding spirit in "Apples and Pears" is that of Charles Fourier, the great French utopian visionary, so Davenport's earlier story "The Dawn in Erewhon" is much indebted to Samuel Butler's utopian novel *Erewhon*. Erewhon exists nowhere, like all

Poetic Prose of Revolution and Utopia
The New Harmony

utopias, but utopias clarify that Things As They Are do not exhaust or fully express The Nature of Things. Butler took much ironic pleasure in turning present moral and legal systems upside down, and in the land of Erewhon, as Butler wrote, "Misfortune generally... is considered more or less criminal, but it admits of classification, and a court is assigned to each of the main heads under which it can be supposed to fall."



Davenport himself takes up this theme in "The Dawn of Erewhon," where he puts these thoughts into the head of a traveller through utopia: "Grace, he understood, was luck, and luck was the due prerogative of the beautiful and the elite. For a lack of luck one was jailed or ostracized. To be ill was the deepest crime. The offenses against society were ugliness, bad luck, ill temper, poverty, reticence, stupidity, and clumsiness."

How seriously does Davenport take this philosophy? Butler himself was only preaching provocatively what the nineteenth century bourgeoisie

were practicing hypocritically. Butler's and Davenport's Erewhonian citizens may have advanced beyond us in some respects, but the idea that luck itself is a sign of divine grace belongs very much to the



Old World of Calvinism and capitalism. To be clear and fair, Davenport's notion of luck and the elect is based on grace, beauty, and intelligence, not class, money, and ownership. Davenport and his philosopher are not self-conscious enemies of democracy; they do find artistocracy in children and in the street more often than among respectable adults. They

might well argue that a true democracy makes aristocrats of us all. That much makes a good deal of sense. But other notions repeatedly appear which are more ambiguous, and possibly even a shade sinister.

In "The Dawn of Erewhon" and also in "Apples and Pears" we find this maxim: "Physique is character," and a corollary: "Character is fate." Judged in tandem, these maxims are not so distantly related to Freud's dictum: "Biology is destiny." None of these notions is absolutely false; there is sufficient truth in them to make us ponder. But in their most twisted and vicious forms, these notions have been used to argue that Jews, Blacks, women, gay people, and the lower classes are biologically and mentally inferior to gentiles, whites, men, heterosexuals, and the upper classes. Why else are certain groups of people so lucky or unlucky — in itself a judgment which may depend on who happens to be writing the history books in any given time and place?

Davenport and the philosopher Adriaan take great interest and pleasure in describing young male physiques and big cocks. Dutch and Scandinavian nudist and erotic publications are popular with Davenport's character. I like balls and biceps and sexy pictures myself, but it is historically significant that the cult of beauty, strength, and fitness has always had its left and right wings, its revolutionaries and reactionaries. Nudism and militarism were paired in the ancient Spartan state; nudism and pacifism have been paired among some religious sects and utopian groups; and nudism and sexual puritanism have sometimes co-existed. In Germany the parties of the Left and Right established mass athletic organizations; the Left's ideal of health and solidarity differed from the Right's ideal of the Superman whose Might Makes Right.

If physique is character and fate, why should it not also be politics? There is an intriguing passage in "Apples and Pears" in which Adriaan notes a discussion with Joris, a nineteen-year-old socialist revolutionary who is also a pedophile:

Joris admits that the spadgers and striplings in *Spartan-sker Yngling* open before us in their lean leggy comeliness toasted by August light are the very ones his revolution is to free from the thrall of capitalist repression. Physique he does not doubt is character. Fourier imagined the Phalanx [his utopian commune] to be a genetic pool, like a people, Chinese or Zulu or Mongol, so that beauty could be in the local idiom. Joris' theory is that ugly people are unloved, unhappy people. We must, he says, free society from its fear of itself. We must free the troll from his iron burrow, the politician from his lies, the economic system from its dependence on war. They say to Eros, these trolls, you may not, you cannot, you must not.

This passage makes plain that Davenport's characters do not have any kind of racist Thousand-Year Reich in mind. And the theory expounded has this much truth: in this society, those who feel trapped in their iron burrows often set traps for folks who enjoy the sun. Granting that our ideals of beauty may

diversify — even granting a genetic overhaul of our species — it is likely that certain individuals will still be found especially attractive. Fourier proposed that, "There must be a decent means of sharing the favors of the handsome couple with twenty other couples," and adds "that in surrendering themselves to a mass of suitors...they will become angels of virtue in the eyes of the public, their suitors, and in their own eyes." Fourier argued that those who are luckiest must be magnanimous — indeed, promiscuous — if they would also be virtuous. The theory which Davenport's young revolutionary expresses also forges too firm a link between sexual repression and political reaction. One may and often does serve the other, but they need not coincide. I have in mind some beautiful teenagers I once met in Laguna Beach who enjoy a relatively free erotic life, but whose brains don't operate independently of their parents and the President.

Adriaan writes, "To explain is to evade." Given all the traps the mind sets for itself, a cry from the heart can make perfect sense. "Why," one character exclaims, "must we try to figure out why we're hugging anybody, like a brat all brains and no manners? Fuck why, and also by whose leave and with whose blessing. Love is love." This character happens to be fucking her brother, but Davenport refreshingly spares us any Freudian ruminations on incest. In the context of "Apples and Pears," the obvious erotic affinity is sufficient. But when Adriaan philosophizes, his ideas require more explication than the reader receives; or else we might expect Whitman's explicit bravado: "I contradict myself? Very well, then, I contradict myself! I am large, I contain multitudes." An-



driaan writes, "Man has a history rather than a nature." How then, is it possible "to breed meanness out of human nature," as he also speculates? Does Adriaan have in mind a utopian eugenics program? To polarize nature and culture absolutely is, of course, a perennial mental trap which may become a material trap as well. Humans are culture-creating animals: culture is our nature.

* * *

The theme of Adriaan's affinity with Fourier is first sounded in "The Dawn of Erewhon," where Adriaan calls him "the only philosopher of happiness," the overstatement of a lover to the beloved. Fourier named his utopia The New Harmony: it is a federation of communes based on craft industry and gardening, and within each commune diverse passions and occupations flourish, which Fourier delightfully — some would say dementedly — enumerates as harmonic series, the musical scale of humanity. "Society," as Adriaan explains in "Apples and pears," "as poetry rather than the newspaper prose of history." Fourier was contemptuous of "civilization," by which he meant a commercial and industrial system which seeks to coerce, sublimate, or mass market human passions. His own ideal was a world where all passions would find harmonic expression — a harmony, however, which allowed for clashing chords and comradely competition.

"Fourier's harmony," Adriaan writes, "is designed to cause dissonances, or divergent energies, which is the subject of its constant watchfulness. Human nature is at all times both civilized and uncivilized." In "Apples and Pears," there is no sharp or

prolonged dissonance within the Harmonian fold of his main characters; the clash is with society. I was not bored by the tranquil tenor of the book. Socially and personally, "Apples and Pears" is largely concerned with what Adriaan describes as "the two contemporary problems of Fourierist harmonics, back-breeding of the machine to cooperative civility, [and] Eros in rompers." The theme of youthful sexuality, as the character of Joris noted, has a certain organic relation to the theme of industrial decentralization and a new economic life.

For a man who was born in 1772 and died in 1837, Charles Fourier was daringly comprehensive in his sexual and cultural conception of a new society, one of the most thorough radicals of his own or any other age. In envisioning The New Harmony he adopted, as he explained, "the principles of ABSOLUTE DOUBT and ABSOLUTE DEVIATION," and was critical even of the revolutionaries and freethinkers of his time. He aimed to establish a "calculus of passionate attraction" which would be "correct, systematic, and invariable," and his quirky scientism is always and at least more poetic than that of later "scientific socialists." The neglect and denial of passions, he believed, produced a civilization of mismatched lovers and of workers mismatched with their work, a wasted world of war, crime, and boredom.

Fourier enjoyed making an analogy between the falling apple which inspired Newton to formulate the laws of gravitational attraction, and the apple in a Paris restaurant which inspired Fourier to formulate his laws of passionate attraction. The latter apple cost fourteen sous, whereas Fourier had just left a region of France where a hundred apples sold for the same price. Something, he decided, was seriously wrong with the social and economic system, and so began his discoveries. The Newtonian equilibrium of the planets could now complement the Fourierist equilibrium of the passions. In civilization, the division of labor condemns masses of people to slave away at tedious jobs, or throws them out of work entirely. People in harmony, however, would work in the "passionate series," which he defined as a "league of various groups...joined together because they share a common liking for the same task, such as the cultivation of a fruit." Fourier's favorite example was a Pear-Growers Series with seven divisions, each corresponding to seven types of pears from quinces to medlars, and each division sub-grouped so that every worker could vary tasks throughout the day, and even change work daily.

Fourier died before the Industrial Revolution gathered its most ravaging momentum, but he was aware that human beings were already being reduced to cogs and consumers in the machinery of production. Adriaan likes bikes and hates cars and this is consistent with Fourierist harmonics. "He was inviting us back onto the land," Adriaan writes of Fourier,

bringing the city with us in small neighborhoods, to a future of eccentric, local, imaginative city-farms incapable of warfare and intent on being rich in the necessities, opulently luxurious in the passions, in the arts, in civilization, just when mankind was being drawn into the slums of cities and the hell of factories.

To make his case, Adriaan may overstate it: "The machine cannot produce without overproducing. It gluts its market. To force this excess onto the market, Capitalism began eating itself, like a hyena its own bowels when it is wounded." The metaphor is apt, but to speak of the machine in general does not do particular machines, including bicycles, sufficient credit. Simone Weil made technological distinctions with which Davenport would surely be sympathetic. In particular, she noted that certain "forms of the machine-tool have produced...perhaps the finest type of conscious worker history has ever seen, namely, the skilled workman."

There is a passage in *Walden Pond* in which Thoreau exhorts: "Simplify, simplify." Fourier's message is different, but not contrary: Diversify, diversify. Where simplicity seemed appropriate, Fourier would have judged it good, though he lacked Thoreau's puritan streak. Luxury in Harmony would

be ethically sound, since no longer based on parasitism, and those with a taste for asceticism would be free to pursue that passion. The utopia of difference would be Harmony. "Difference," writes Adriaan, "is potential energy.... Without differences, everything becomes homogenous mush. Entropy is not chaos, but uniformity. Reverberant bounce must be the Harmony's dance, difference caroming off difference, energy jostling energy."

If this sounds like anarchy, then this word deserves consideration. Anarchy is often used to mean disorder, but anarchists use the word to describe an



order based upon cooperative autonomy of individuals and communities. The disorder of numerous militarized, centralized nation states is precisely what reigns in the world today; and any world government the politicians might create could very well be the general triumph of a particular imperialism. For the time being, utopians might find it wise simply to stand out of the way of state Juggernauts, to create tribes and to seek safe turf wherever it may still exist. Any active resistance would have to rely mainly on civil disobedience and industrial or technical sabotage, since we can't match state militarism without becoming the state. Whether utopian tribes are reclusive or resistant, the brute fact remains that we cannot, short of spaceships and science fiction, escape this earth which the madmen may blow up.

* * *

Davenport belongs in the excellent company of Wilhelm Reich, Paul Goodman, Frank Lloyd Wright, Herbert Read, Lewis Mumford, Murray Bookchin, and Ursula LeGuin — of all, in fact, who have considered ethics and aesthetics, love and work with utopian hope and intelligence, and who have done so in the wake of the Industrial Revolution, in the wake of world wars, and with the possible prospect of nuclear and ecological catastrophe. Like Reich and Goodman, Davenport pays sensible attention to youth and sex, and this is the theme in which he truly revises and further diversifies Fourierist harmonics. Even more than "back-breeding of the machine," the theme of "Eros in rompers" is likely to pain all dinosaurs of all political persuasions, left, right, and center. It was especially Davenport's erotic utopianism which prompted a *Village Voice* reviewer to dismiss his book as "lunacy."

What works to defeat sensuality and sanity in everyday life is the ever-alert army of reaction: battalions of social-climbing social workers; sexless sexologists; psychiatrists and psychologists enslaved to the SuperEgo; lawyers and legislators who make laws, not love; five-star generals with bombs on the brain; advertisers who make us lust for things unlovable; pedagogues and politicians who are compulsive liars; priests without spirit; parents who cannibalize their own kids; and all people who swallow the stick they are beaten with and call it spine, as Heine (I think) once wrote. Davenport seems to suggest a strategy of circumvention rather than confrontation, a strategy more in accord with Fourier's own concepts of personality and passionate attraction, rather than Marx's concepts of history and class struggle. A balance of both views would best serve anyone concerned with social change.

Continued on next page

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- HTLV-III: MEDICAL & POLITICAL PROBLEMS
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- PANEL DISCUSSION: PEOPLE WITH AIDS, ARC, HTLV-III, TALK ABOUT THEIR PERSONAL EXPERIENCES

Wrap-Up

signed for the hearing impaired

Utopian Prose

Continued from page 9

Fourier was a sharp critic of coercive monogamy and the family; his incipient feminism influenced many socialists, and Fourier often repeated this proposition: "Social progress and changes of period are brought about by virtue of the progress of women towards liberty, and social retrogression occurs as a result of a diminution in the liberty of women." The official "Left" — often reactionary — has been much less friendly towards Fourier's ideas about passionate variation. He used the word "manias" to refer to erotic enthusiasms often stigmatized today as perversions, and he viewed them with approval as long as they were consensual, writing of the "prejudices I will have to combat in order to rehabilitate manias, and especially amorous manias, in the eyes of the public." Did he have any personal motive for doing so? He does mention one mania of his own: "I was 35 years old when by chance I found myself in a situation which made me realize that I had a taste or mania for sapphism. I discovered I loved lesbians and was eager to do anything to please them." Fourier promised, "In Harmony manias will be particularly bizarre and plentiful among the more complex personality types."

In Fourier's Harmonian order, children enjoy a great degree of independence from parents, teachers, and adults in general. They form Little Hordes which indulge in rowdiness and filth, but also share in the various labors of the community. Education would be sensual and aesthetic, and proceed by degrees to more abstract learning. Fourier recommended that children exercise the senses of taste and smell through cookery, and of sight and sound through opera. But then we find that he shared a common prejudice of his time and ours: "Of the five senses there is one, that of touch, whose influence is almost null before the age of puberty. A child does not know love, the chief branch of the sense of touch...."

In contrast to Fourier's attitude, children and youth are an almost constant presence in "Apples and Pears," and they are persons who exercise all five senses with passion. They associate with adults who are members of a particular social milieu, a libertarian stratum of Dutch and Scandinavian academics, activists, and artists. Davenport's characters express "manias" such as incest and pedophilia quite openly. Privacy is negotiated without compulsion, and much sex and nudity are taken for granted in the company of friends. Children are encouraged to take their time masturbating, and two young boys named Jan and Hans carry on their love affair in the liberated zone of their extended family, a kinship of affinity as much as blood. It is Adriaan who rescues the teenaged Sander from disintegration, taking him from the hands of a mental doctor and setting him to work building a cabin on an island. Speaking of this, Sander confesses how bewildered he first was by this man who spoke Greek and cared nothing for "my fucked-up past," and indeed Sander's past remains untold in this book. "You hurt my feelings," he says to Adriaan. "But in making me respect a straight line, a nail placed just right, things squared away, neat, you put me back together. We built a cabin that summer, and we built one Sander."

Sander blossoms into an excellent lover and painter, and in time he initiates a utopian household with six members. The three adults include Sander, his sister Grietje, and Adriaan; Sander and Adriaan maintain a friendship with erotic warmth, and they are both Grietje's lovers. The three children include Jan, a constant visitor from another household; his lover Hans, who is Adriaan's son from a previous relationship; and Wolfje, an orphaned hustler Adriaan finds on the streets and brings home to be Sander's apprentice. This constellation is portrayed with cumulative pointillist pigments from Adriaan's journals. No suspense but the sweet mystery of reality, and if there is a moral here, it is the passing on of passion and compassion from one person to another so that, for example, Adriaan brings out the best in Sander, and Sander in turn brings out the best in Wolfje.

Adriaan describes Wolfje by describing thistles — thistles which

seem to flourish in parking lots, untended yards, desperate soil in seams between a desert of asphalt and concrete, with majestic disdain for the tackiness of their surroundings. Wolfje is such a thistle, oblivious of his nobility. We have put him in a garden. His stamina that throve on the main chance and hunger and meanness, will it go nerveless, soft of fiber, dull? Gardens of thistles: Fourier's aching heart's longing.

This kid was at least spared a conventional school and family, but William Blake gave the best answer to Adriaan's question: "A tree blasted with blight may still bear fruit, but if the tree bear fruit let none say that the fruit was in consequence of the blight." The reason we may hope for a more harmonious life is precisely because human creatures sometimes and somehow nobly thrive like thistles despite the desperate soil: how much nobler we might thrive in a garden of varied soil, in a garden of thistles, rose, apples and pears! Island, house, garden: all of these are Harmony in miniature, and often become the assuagement of the aching heart's longing in us all.

HTLV-III

Continued from page 6

test or participate in research until they are assured of the confidentiality of the results.

Mayer says he understands why the test worries people. But, he argues, the epidemiological research needs to be done so that scientists can gather data on which co-factors contribute to the development of AIDS. Thus far, research indicates that only a small percentage of people exposed to HTLV-III go on to develop full-blown AIDS. Some people contract a milder but chronic form of the disease known as AIDS Related Complex (ARC). And others remain asymptomatic.

"I'd like to believe that people taking the seriousness of the epidemic to heart makes a difference. But we need to do the research to get epidemiological curves on both AIDS and [HTLV-III]," commented Mayer.

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Gender Blind, Ambi-Affectionate, Versatile Visions of Bisexual Pride

By Roger Frye

We are growing. Last year's conference in Hartford drew 150 people. On March 2 of this year, 250 people who call themselves ambi-affectionate, androgynous, asexual, bisexual, byke, gay, gender blind, half gay, het, lesbian, and versatile came to the Old Cambridge Baptist Church to explore the space "somewhere between" and to develop new visions of bisexuality. The conference was organized by members of the Boston Bisexual Women's and Men's Networks. It brought people from all over New England, to form their own networks, to write a book, and to open the eyes of people in the gay and straight worlds so they can see us, not as confused, not as swingers, but as bisexual individuals.

Robyn Ochs pointed out in her keynote address that we share the oppression of gay people in a special way. We are often the primary contact to the gay community for heterosexuals, yet we

cannot say to the boss who would fire us, "Please, just reduce my hours to half time. I'm only bisexual." We cannot say to the basher, "Please, just beat me on one side. I'm only half gay."

The morning workshops were intended to build foundations. We divided into affinity groups to meet in safety with people like ourselves and to share common experiences. If you want a list, you can work out all the combinations of gender and gender preference, and add in marital status, age, ethnic background, and one more for potluck.

We started out with a powerful technique, one which was used in several workshops throughout the day — partner exchange. No, we didn't swap partners; we turned to a neighbor and shared our stories. Now some people fall in love with someone new every five seconds as they enter a bar; for me it just takes five minutes of careful listening and being heard. (Oh yes, add

some wild dancing — but that came later.) Out of the partner exchange came subjects for group discussion. How can bi women and men meet more often? Doesn't "bisexual" connote the sexual too much? Isn't everyone really bisexual? How can we open both our closet doors at once?

The issue of giving power in relationships interested me most. I disagreed sharply with the general feeling that it was mostly an issue in male-male relationships. In my relationships with men, I feel free to touch anywhere and anytime; I can leave scars; I find it easier to voice my feelings about how we spend our time. With women I tend to hold back and watch out for relics of male privilege. How patronizing! My discoveries about myself in relation to men are teaching me what I have been denying of myself with women.

Continued on page 12

Assumptions and Prejudice

By Veneita Porter

The notion of privilege fascinates me. In a societal sense there are always those who have privilege and those who do not. As gays/lesbians, we have challenged the idea of heterosexual prerogative, yet how often have we examined our own assumptions toward others' sexuality.

Where does a bisexual person find a safety zone in the sexual battlefield of the 1980s? The conference on bisexuality held in Cambridge last weekend brought to light a myriad questions faced by a community in transition. Are we het-identified? Some are. There were elders with wives or husbands, and children long grown. There were same-sex couples holding anxious hands waiting for some enlightenment on the subject. There were no two alike in this group. Our stories are

different and so are our lives.

A sense of direction seemed to evolve through the day-long process of the conference. The myths were disposed of: confused people afraid to come out as real gays/lesbians. There is a basic need for all surrounding communities to be educated, for people to start confronting the fact that there is often a rather slender space between assumption and prejudice. The most difficult task I have faced recently is my own bisexuality, coming out in the context of my lesbian world. As gay/lesbian people we cannot afford to waste time arguing about who is more oppressed.

The basic components of a human relationship are person-to-person "input, output, electricity." The need for intimacy is fundamental. Everyone willingly

admits that good things are hard to find: people, time, sex. If unfettered, there is an inherent flexibility in bisexuality that shows great promise for all communities concerned. Just as gays/lesbians need allies who are unafraid of their lives, the same holds true for their bisexual counterparts. Closets are areas of confinement; double closets, as exist for bisexuals, are just as uncomfortable.

The conference as a whole was successful; the organizers deserve a great deal of applause and respect. Many of the workshop leaders were experienced in re-evaluation counseling, and I found these structures too confining in this particular setting. I'm looking forward to seeing more people of color. Most of all, though, I'm simply looking forward to the future.

Allies to Gay/Lesbian Liberation

By Pam Mitchell

I attended the conference on bisexuality as a lesbian ally to bisexual people. (Gay and heterosexual allies were welcome at the conference, though in my wanderings I found only a few other lesbians and gay men, one or two straight women, and no straight men.) My reasons for being there were both political and personal.

The event was co-sponsored by the Boston Bisexual Women's Network, a group a friend of mine helped start. This friend provided crucial support to me during a crisis in my life, at a time when many of my lesbian friends disappeared. At that time she honored and trusted me enough to let me see the considerable pain she had experienced when she was forced to choose between the women's community and her bisexual identity, and her confusion as she struggled to maintain her commitment to feminism and to gay liberation without a sense of belonging or support from any


community. When I see signs of a growing bisexual community — and particularly of a political movement of bisexuals willing to identify themselves strongly with the goals of gay and lesbian liberation — I can't help but think of my friend and feel profoundly moved and proud of her.

Not everyone at this conference was like my friend. In fact one of the interesting things about the participants is that no one seemed to be like anyone else. Refreshingly, there seems to be no bisexual-clone "look" yet, and people don't seem to have their raps down.

The candor and the exploratory spirit of the discussions meant dealing with some random non-feminist and/or anti-gay remarks from "less-conscious" participants, but for the most part other bisexuals responded to them very quickly. In particular, many of the women — either because they had, as a couple of them joked ironically, "gone through a-

lesbian phase," or because they are still very connected to the women's community — were aware of the need to acknowledge the heterosexual privilege they do enjoy when relating with men and also their debt to feminism. At the same time, they expressed tremendous bitterness about the women's movement's intolerance and distrust of them.

It was hard hearing individual stories, both about the inhospitality of the gay and lesbian movement to such close cousins and about experiences with homophobia parallel to those of gay people. But the sense of newness and the tremendous need of the participants to talk to one another reminded me of the feminist and gay movements in earlier, more optimistic days. That enthusiasm and generation of new ideas could be an asset to the gay and lesbian movement, should we choose to welcome it.




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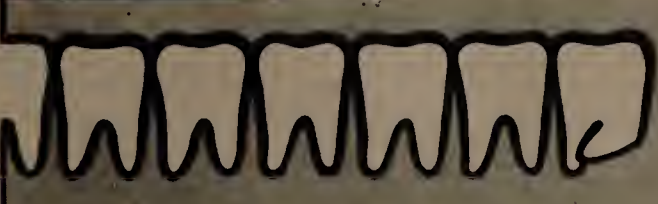
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New Bisexual Pride

Continued from page 11

The workshops after lunch were more ambitious: first, a set of dialogues with each other aimed at developing new visions of ourselves and increasing our community; and then a set of workshops in which we faced outwards both a personal and political level. I found this part overbearingly positive. Sometimes I felt that it wouldn't be politically correct for me to talk about how much I fear losing one of my lovers, unless I were ready to move off that fear. But then again, the two groups I chose to work in were discussing getting the best of both worlds and bisexual pride. I could just as well have chosen to discuss the difficulties of relationships or the fear of AIDS.

I remember two themes dominating discussions: oppression by gays and lesbian myths. Someone complained, "The bisexual community accepts the lesbian and gay community with open

arms, so there is no reason why the gay community shouldn't." Others couldn't understand how gays — who are always being told they are promiscuous, or going through a stage, or not living up to their gender roles — can turn around and try to peg those attitudes on us. Are you gay or straight? The answer is not, "Yes, a little of both." The answer is, "No!" No, and don't ask me to explain myself when I switch from masculine at one time to feminine at another. No, and don't presume that I relate to everyone I meet on a sexual basis.

The second area of disappointment with the gay community focused on the disillusionments women had had with the lesbian ideal. One woman regretted that there are certain things you can't do because you are a lesbian. Another resented lesbians who considered her a terrible bet. But there was more anger around the

myth that women can't hurt women, the assumption that all lesbians must be feminists. How can a lesbian turn out to be sexist and racist? How can a woman sexually assault another woman?

I think that most women still believe that women tend to be more tender than men, but must admit that some women can be less tender than most men. I hope some realize that some men can be even more tender than most women.

There were wonderful musical performances and a dance after the dinner break, but I can't describe them any better than Cassandra, the emcee, who introduced so many of them by saying that the music would have to speak for itself. I leave you with an image. The image of the bisexual as a fence-sitter. We don't have to fall off the fence. If we all sit on it, it will collapse and stop bothering you.

Baltimore

Continued from page 6

And Michael Mitchell said, "The majority vote is often wrong," as he cast the seventh yes.

Council President "Du" Burns, who at the beginning of the lobbying indicated support and willingness to work for the bill, cast the first no vote.

Lesbian and gay activists who worked for the bill cited outrageously homophobic statements from councilors and anti-gay community pressure as causes for the bill's defeat. City Councilor Mimi DiPietro of the First District announced that, "[A priest] kissed a boy on the mouth and put his tongue down his throat.... That's the kind of rights they want."

Second District Councilor Nathaniel McFadden said, "We have as Black people attached

ourselves to too many liberal causes in an increasingly reactionary environment." McFadden also said that passing a gay rights bill would dilute the Black civil rights movement.

Councilor Rikki Spector, also of the Fifth District, had said two months earlier that "voting for the gay rights bill would be endorsing a third gender."

And Councilor Tim Murphy of the Sixth District explained after casting his no vote that "there was not a sufficient amount of discrimination to warrant the bill. He added, "No constituent of mine has said that he was unhappy with my vote."

Councilor Iris G. Reeves of the Fifth District was the only councilor, according to the *Baltimore Sun*, who conceded she would

have voted yes, instead of no, if she had felt free to vote her conscience.

"In terms of strategy, we made no mistakes," said Mardie Walker, an organizer for the coalition, although she expressed disappointment that only 30 gay men and lesbians were present in Council Chambers for the vote.

On the brighter side, two media monitoring groups have formed here to educate the press on gay and lesbian issues and to fight homophobia.

Activists said they will not try to reintroduce legislation until a new Council is elected in November. Activists may also push Mayor Schaefer to issue an executive order banning discrimination.



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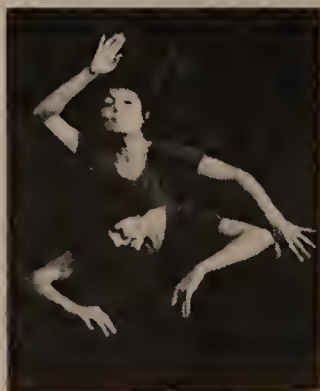
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This guide provides a listing of gay/lesbian owned, staffed, or supportive businesses and services. To have your business or service listed (for only \$100.00 per year) call 426-4469.

CALENDAR

March 16 to March 29

16 saturday

Boston — Tom Wilson Weinberg's *Ten Percent Revue* musical theater with Joey Branden, Jean Gauthier, Elliot Pilshaw and Robin White-Portnoy. Arlington Street Church, 8PM. \$8, Fri. and Sat.; \$6, Sun. Continues through April 28. Info: 542-3622.

Cambridge — *Sister of Fire*, a play about the British witch trials; Old Cambridge Baptist Church, 1151 Mass. Ave. 8PM. \$7. Runs Fri.-Sat. until April 6. Info: 661-7263.

Boston — *Do Patent Leather Shoes Really Reflect Up?*, a musical comedy; Wilbur Theatre, 246 Tremont St. 8PM. \$27.50-\$15. Continues Tues.-Sat. 8PM, Sun. 2PM & 7PM. Info: 423-4008.

Medford — "Solitude's Companions: Portraits of Rural Women," first of two-part series; WMFO 91.5 FM. 10AM-2PM.

Brighton — Photographs of Nicaragua by Zoe Ann Perry; 40 Academy Hill Rd. Continuing till 3/31. Info: 782-6032.

Ashland — Tri-county Association social at Bob's. 8PM. Info: 879-7527.

17 sunday

South End — St. Patrick's Day *Bike Ride*, sponsored by Chiltern Mtn. Club. 10-15 mile ride. Info: Bob, 266-3812 or Cindy, 491-4612.

Cambridge — Celebration and talk with Hilda Scott, author of *Working Your Way to the Bottom: The Feminization of Poverty*; New Words Bookstore, 186 Hampshire St. 2-4PM. Free. Info: 742-5867.

Watertown — GLOW, Gays & Lesbians of Watertown, *potluck dinner* and meeting. 6PM. Info: 926-5371 or 923-2065 evenings before 9PM.

Somerville — Women's *book discussion* group open to new members; this week: *The Women of Brewster Place* by Gloria Naylor. 4PM. Info: Nancy, 489-3601, or Liz, 666-0350.

Boston — "Access to Justice: *Women Incarcerated*," sponsored by Women's Theological Center. Info: 277-1330.

Cambridge — *Women's School* registration for women needing physical assistance. 4-7PM, also 3/19. 46 Pleasant St. Central Sq. Info: 354-8807.

19 tuesday

Back Bay — *Police/Community* Panel Meeting; Fisher Junior College Auditorium, 116 Beacon St. 7PM. Info: 247-4457.

Cambridge — "Intervention in Vietnam and Central America: Parallels and Differences," talk by **Noam Chomsky**; Harvard University, Emerson 105. 7:30PM. \$2. Info: CASA, 492-8699.

Boston — *Rainbow Coalition* Lesbian & Gay Constituency general meeting. 7:30PM. Info: Michelle, 776-4514.

20 wednesday

Worcester — **Kevin Cathcart** will speak on gay civil rights; Dana Commons, Clark University. 8PM. Directions: 793-7431.

Cambridge — Spring Equinox with *Amethyst Women*. Old Cambridge Baptist Church. 7:30PM. Bring salad/bread/dessert. Main dish, live dance band & childcare provided. \$3 more/less.

Cambridge — *Baby Boomers* Rap; Daughters of Bilitis, 1151 Mass. Ave., Old Cambridge Baptist Church. 8PM. \$1. Info: 661-3633.

Boston — "The Health Concerns of *Bisexual Women*," with Linette Liebling, Health Educator for the AIDS Action Committee; Somewhere Else, 295 Franklin St. 7PM. All women welcome. Info: BBWN, PO Box 1534, Jamaica Plain, 02130.

Boston — *Police/Community* Panel Meeting; The Towers, 140 Bay State Rd. 7PM. All welcome. Info: 247-4457

Cambridge — Open discussion group — topic "*Anger*"; Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., Central Sq. 8PM. All welcome.



21 thursday

Boston — *Lesbian & Gay Pride* Committee meeting; Hill House on Joy St. 7PM. All welcome. Info: 889-4777 or P.O. Box 8916, Boston. 02114.

Boston — *Gay Community News* always needs help on production night when articles are proofread and pasted up. If you've done *proofreading* or *layout* and would like to volunteer, stop by 167 Tremont St. 5th Floor (5-8pm for proofing, 7:30-11pm for layout). Come help out GCN and read tomorrow's news today.

Cambridge — Marea Gordett, author of *Freeze Tag*, to read her *poetry*; Building 4, Rm. 270, MIT, 8PM. Free.

Cambridge — Drop-in discussion group for women with *incest* histories — topic "Confrontation"; Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St. 7:30-9:30PM. Info: 492-1818.

Boston — "The *Macho Mystique*," a workshop by sociologist Craig Lambert; Boston Film/Video Foundation, 1126 Boylston St. 8PM. \$10. Info: 536-1540.

Cambridge — *Women's School* registration, 46 Pleasant St., Central Sq. 6-8PM, also Fri. and 1-3PM Sat. Info: 354-8807.

22 friday

Boston — GCN VOLUNTEER NIGHT!!! Come help send out the paper to our subscribers. Refreshments and good times. Come anytime after 6PM to 167 Tremont Street, 5th Floor (near Boylston and Park Street "T" stops). If the door is locked, buzz us on the GCN intercom located outside the front door.

Boston — Opening reception: "Girls Just Wanna Make Art," painting, installation & collage by Wendy Bergman, Maureen Gannon, MB Hermans, Joanne Hetherington, & Mary Traynor; Fort Point Gallery, 249 A Street. Exhibit continues until April 12.

Boston — *Shabbat Torah* Service and Oneg with Am Tikva. Hill House, Beacon Hill. 8PM. Info: 782-8894.

Cambridge — Ruggles, Doft and Walton in *concert* at the Modern Times Cafe, 134 Hampshire St., Inman Sq. Info: 354-8371.

Provincetown — Wonderful Hands Open House to celebrate the second annual *body awareness* day; Wonderful Hands, 290A Commercial St. 6-8PM. Info: 487-0555.

Boston — Debra Wise, Jeffe Steele & David Perrigo present *performance sketches* of Nicaragua; ICA, 955 Boylston St. Info: 266-5152.

Waltham — *June Jordan* to speak; Schwartz Auditorium at Brandeis University. 7:30PM. \$3, \$2.50 students. Info: 647-2181.

Cambridge — *In the Name of the People*, Boston-area premiere of new film about El Salvador; Cambridge YWCA, 7 Temple St., Central Sq. 7:30PM. \$2.75. Also Sat. and Sun. Info: Angry Arts, 522-1058.

23 saturday

Boston — "Substance Abuse in the Gay Community," discussion with Greater Boston Gay Men's Association; St. John the Evangelist, 33 Bowdoin St., Beacon Hill. All welcome. Please bring food or drink. 8PM.

Boston — *Ten Percent Revue* benefit for the *AIDS Action Committee*. Arlington Street Church. 8PM. \$10 at the AAC office. Info: 536-7733.

24 sunday

Boston — Welcome-to-Spring *Bike Ride* with Chiltern Mt. Club. 10-15 miles, generally flat. Meet at Boston Public Library at noon. Info: Bob, 266-3812.

Cambridge — Red Hearts monthly *potluck* brunch for *leftward-leaning gay-men*. 10AM-1PM. Bring food. Info: Elliot, 868-0006 or George, 547-2120.

Boston — *Seventh-day Adventist* discussion: "Homosexuality from a Seventh-day Adventist clergyman's perspective." Info: Dave, 1-668-8534 or Alan, 1-365-5636.

Jamaica Plain — JP Lesbian & Gay Neighbors *potluck dinner*, bring food and non-alcoholic drink; First Church Hall, Eliot & Centre Sts. 4PM-7PM. Info: 522-3894 or 524-7044.

25 monday

Cambridge — *Black & White Men Together*: "Resisting Racism Discussion Group." 8PM. Info: 536-1160.

26 tuesday

Cambridge — *Younger Lesbians*, 22 and under meeting; Daughters of Bilitis, 1151 Mass. Ave., Old Cambridge Baptist Church. 8PM. \$1. Newcomers welcome. Info: 661-3633.

27 wednesday

Boston — Gala Opening of the *Women's Theater Festival*. Continuing through Sun. Tonight: Kuumba from Baltimore. 7:30PM. At Boston Shakespeare Co. 52 St. Botolph St. Info: 267-5600.



Split Britches, see March 27

29 friday

Cambridge — "Strange Bedfellows: *Feminists, the Right and Anti-Pornography*;" by Lisa Duggan. MIT Room 9-150, 105 Mass. Ave. 8PM. Free. Info: Black Rose Forum, 547-5513.

Notes

spring theater excitement

Boston's spring theater season is looking more exciting, and varied, than usual this year. The *big* cultural news this time around is ART's production of Robert Wilson's *the CIVIL warS* at the Loeb in Cambridge. A three-hour, multimedia performance piece, *the CIVIL warS* is a non-linear, non-narrative collage/montage series of images which are at once both perplexing and exciting and breathtaking. Personal response suggests any number of interpretations, but the one that was most clear, to me, was that it was a reflective meditation on the decline and fall of patriarchy in both the social and family structures. Others might think otherwise, but whatever it is, it's great. (Call the Loeb box office for times and prices: 547-8300.)

Zorba which opened several weeks ago is still loitering about town. A showpiece for Anthony Quinn, the show is a mushy rehash of the original novel, as well as an inept retelling of the sentimental movie. With the exception of some cute men in the chorus there is almost nothing of interest here. More than anything else, it is a monument to what now passes for first-rate, top-scale Broadway musicals. (At the Shubert, 426-4520).

With one hit and one dud there is still plenty more up and coming. The New Ehrlich is presenting Moliere's scathing attack on hypocrisy *The Misanthrope* beginning March 6, through April 6 (482-6316). And beginning April 17 they will be reviving Mart Crowley's loved and hated *Boys in the Band*, with a few new surprises for this production.

Sex is also the topic of a new musical coming to the Wilbur and playing through April 21: *Do Black Patent Leather Shoes Really Reflect Up?* Set in Catholic schools circa 1965, the musical deals with the pros and prohibitions of sex and everything you weren't supposed to know about. (423-4008)

The Provincetown Theater Company will be presenting *A Thurbur Carnival*, based on the *New Yorker* stories of James Thurber. The production will begin on March 28 and play until April 14 at the Provincetown Arts Association Museum building. (487-2695)

Boston's own Lyric Stage will be presenting *French Without Tears* beginning March 20 through April 21. Written by the underrated, and homosexual, Terrence Rattigan, this comedy of sex and manners is rarely presented. A must for anyone interested in this chapter of British genteel drama. (742-8703)

And finally the Merrimack Repertory Theater in Lowell will be producing Lorraine Hansbury's moving *A Raisin in the Sun* beginning March 22 through April 7. When it was produced in 1959, *Raisin* changed both the image of Blacks on Broadway, and the Broadway stage itself. (For more information on Hansbury, check out her letters to the lesbian *Ladder* that are reprinted in Jonathan Katz's *Gay American History*.) A good chance to see a great play. (454-3926)

— Michael Bronski

The GCN weekly calendar includes events in the Boston area of interest to the lesbian and gay community. We try not to leave anything out but remember, we depend on you to keep us informed. Let us know as early as possible what your group is planning.

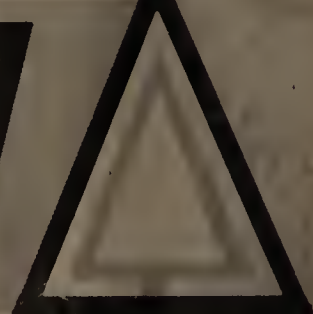
The deadline is Friday noon for the following issue. Just send the information to GCN Calendar, 167 Tremont Street, Fifth Floor, Boston, MA 02111.

Calendar compiled by Miranda Kolbe

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